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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/394,514	09/13/1999	TAKAO OGAWA	0102/0074	4339

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EXAMINER

COLON, CATHERINE M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 08/27/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/394,514

Applicant(s)

OGAWA ET AL.

Examiner

C. Michelle Colon

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 April 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 22, 2003 has been entered.

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Claims 1-7 are now pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-3, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tsuda (U.S. 5,933,096).

As per claim 1, Tsuda discloses an ETC (electronic toll collection) system comprising:

an antenna having a predetermined directivity for providing a limited radio-communication service zone (col. 4, lines 39-50; items 40 and 42 in Figure 3; The reference discloses antennae at the toll collection plaza having a predetermined direction of a limited radio-communication service zone.);

a vehicle sensor positioned at a location closer to oncoming vehicles than said antenna by a predetermined interval for detecting a vehicle which reaches a predetermined position in the limited radio-communication service zone (col. 4, lines 26-31; item 12 in Figure 3; The reference discloses entry sensors positioned closer to oncoming vehicles than the antennae. The sensors detect when a vehicle reaches a predetermined position in the limited radio-communication service zone.);

first means for transmitting a radio signal via the antenna (col. 4, lines 39-46; col. 5, lines 28-48; Figure 5);

second means for deciding whether or not a radio response to the radio signal is received via the antenna (col. 5, lines 11-27; Figure 4; The reference discloses a means for determining whether or not a received signal has come from an oncoming vehicle.);

third means for, in cases where the second means decides that a radio response to the radio signal is received, judging that there is an ETC vehicle incoming (col. 5, lines 5-64; Figures 4-6; The reference discloses using the radio received signal to judge that an ETC vehicle is incoming.); and

fourth means for, in cases where the vehicle sensor detects a vehicle while the second means decides that a radio response to the radio signal is not received, judging that there is a non-ETC vehicle incoming (col. 2, lines 16-19; col. 4, lines 32-38; col. 5,

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lines 5-10; The reference discloses an entry sensor for detecting incoming vehicles. If there is no radio received signal, then the system detects a non-ETC vehicle incoming.).

As per claim 2, Tsuda discloses an ETC system as recited in claim 1, wherein the first means comprises means for continuously transmitting the radio signal via the antenna (col. 5, lines 28-48; The reference discloses a continuous transmission of radio signal from the antennas when the sensor detects a vehicle is present.).

As per claim 3, Tsuda discloses an ETC system as recited in claim 1, wherein the limited radio-communication service zone has a length greater than a length of a standard vehicle and smaller than twice the length of said vehicle (col. 5, lines 49-55; Figures 3 and 6).

As per claim 6, Tsuda discloses an ETC (electronic toll collection) system, comprising:

an antenna (col. 4, lines 39-50; items 40 and 42 in Figure 3; The reference discloses antennae at the toll collection plaza having a predetermined direction of a limited radio-communication service zone.);

transceiver means working cooperatively with said antenna for outputting a radio signal at a given rating level to cover a limited radio-communication service zone (col. 4, lines 39-46; col. 5, lines 28-48; Figure 5);

a vehicle sensor positioned at a location closer to oncoming vehicles than said antenna by a predetermined interval for detecting whether a vehicle has reached a predetermined position in said limited radio-communication zone (col. 4, lines 26-31; item 12 in Figure 3; The reference discloses entry sensors positioned closer to

oncoming vehicles that the antennae. The sensors detect when a vehicle reaches a predetermined position in the limited radio-communication service zone.);

said transceiver means further working cooperatively with said antenna for detecting radio response to said radio signal from each vehicle detected by said vehicle sensor within said radio-communication zone (col. 5, lines 11-27; Figure 4; The reference discloses a means for determining whether or not a received signal has come from an oncoming vehicle.); and

processor means for deciding a vehicle that has been detected by said vehicle sensor in said radio-communication zone is a non-ETC vehicle if no radio response to said radio signal is detected from said vehicle (col. 2, lines 16-19; col. 4, lines 32-38; col. 5, lines 5-10; The reference discloses an entry sensor for detecting incoming vehicles. If there is no radio received signal, then the system detects a non-ETC vehicle incoming.).

As per claim 7, Tsuda discloses an ETC system as recited in claim 6, wherein said processor means decides a vehicle that has been detected by said vehicle sensor in said radio-communication zone is an ETC vehicle if a radio response to said radio signal is detected from said vehicle (col. 5, lines 5-64; Figures 4-6; The reference discloses using the radio received signal to judge that an ETC vehicle is incoming.).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuda (U.S. 5,933,096).

As per claim 4, Tsuda does not expressly disclose an ETC system as recited in claim 1, wherein the limited radio-communication service zone has a length of about 6.5m along a lane. However, Tsuda does disclose a limited radio-communication service zone of about 4m so that only one vehicle at a time passes through the radio-communication service zone to ensure that the correct vehicle is being charged the toll (col. 4, lines 55-62). At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have the limited radio-communication service zone be of specified dimensions because doing so ensures that the toll radio signal is communicating with the appropriate vehicle at the appropriate location, thus providing accurate toll collection (Tsuda, col. 2, lines 46-50).

As per claim 5, Tsuda does not expressly disclose an ETC system as recited in claim 1, wherein the vehicle sensor is only one in the ETC system. However, Tsuda discloses only one "entry" sensor, which first detects the presence of an oncoming vehicle and triggers the radio signals of the antennae (col. 4, lines 28-29 and 46-48). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the

art to use only one vehicle sensor in the system because that is all that is necessary to initially detect the presence of an oncoming vehicle, thus, providing adequate means for triggering communication with the antennae.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Claus et al. (U.S. 5,310,999) discusses a secure toll collection system using vehicle sensors and antennae.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Michelle Colon whose telephone number is 703-605-4251. The examiner can normally be reached Monday – Thursday from 8:30am to 5:30pm and every other Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached at 703-305-9643.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trad marks

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Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

703-305-7687 [Official Communications; including After Final
communications labeled "Box AF"]

703-746-7202 [For status inquiries, draft communication, labeled
"Proposed" or "Draft"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal
Drive, Arlington, VA 7th floor receptionist.


cmc
August 21, 2003


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
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